DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 314 923 EC 222 083

AUTHOR Smith-Davis, Judy; Cohen, Mary
TITLE Preventing Attrition through Teacher Induction and Mentoring and Entry-Year Induction Programs and Practices: A Bibliography. Information on Personnel Supply and Demand.
INSTITUTION ERIC Clearinghouse on Handicapped and Gifted Children, Reston, Va.; National Clearinghouse for Professions in Special Education, Reston, VA.
SPONS AGENCY Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (ED), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE Jul 89
GRANT G0087C3053-88
NOTE 26p.; Prepared by the Supply/Demand Analysis Center.
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Information Analyses (070) -- Reference Materials - Bibliographies (131)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Beginning Teacher Induction; Beginning Teachers; *Disabilities; Elementary Secondary Education; *Faculty Mobility; Mentors; Social Support Groups; Special Education Teachers; *Teacher Burnout; Teacher Orientation; *Teacher Persistence; Teaching Skills

ABSTRACT

The paper examines issues in special education teacher attrition and reviews a variety of induction and mentorship programs to lessen the common isolation of beginning teachers. Statistics indicating the high attrition rate among beginning teachers, especially special education teachers are cited and related to lack of training and ongoing support. Teacher induction models are compared showing that all emphasize a high level of interaction among new teachers, their colleagues, and administrators. Examples of successful mentoring programs are cited in the Houston Mathematics and Science Improvement Consortium (which matches high school science/mathematics teachers with practicing scientists and mathematicians) and the teacher induction program at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater (in which beginning teachers are matched with a mentor and and a university consultant). Selected state initiatives from Virginia, North Carolina, Wisconsin, Florida, and Utah are briefly described. It is concluded that such programs can reasonably be expected to accomplish such goals as increasing the retention rate of promising beginning teachers and screening out the least promising teachers but cannot be expected to overcome major problems in the school context such as misplacements, overloads, or overcrowded classes. Forty-four references are cited. An attached bibliography on entry year induction programs and practices lists about 70 references dated from 1977 through 1988. (DB)

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Preventing Attrition through Teacher Induction and Mentoring

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Entry-Year Induction Programs and Practices: A Bibliography

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National Clearinghouse for Professions in Special Education
The Supply/Demand Analysis Center
National Association of State Directors of Special Education
2021 K Street N.W.
Suite 315
Washington, DC 20006

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July 1989

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ATTRITION IS A CENTRAL FEATURE in shortages of qualified teachers in the United States. Most new hires in education stem from the need to replace teachers who have left, rather than from the demands of expanding enrollments or new programs (Grissmer & Kirby, 1987). The results of studies of personnel supply and demand in the 1980's have shown that attrition leads to serious problems involving both the quality and quantity of teachers, as evidenced by the findings of just a few of these investigations.

* The 1988 Metropolitan Life Survey of American Teachers (Louis Harris & Associates) showed that 34 percent of all teachers reported plans to leave the field in the coming five years.

* The National Education Association has reported that only half the teachers who enter the field remain more than five years (Futrell, 1986).

* The first-year teacher is 2½ times more likely to leave the profession than the more experienced teacher, and high rates of attrition continue through succeeding years; "of all beginning teachers who enter the profession, 40 to 50 percent will leave during the first seven years of their careers, and in excess of two-thirds of those will do so in the first four years of teaching" (Huling-Austin, 1986).

* Teachers who are the most qualified and academically superior appear to be the most likely to leave (Darling-Hammond, 1984; Schlechty & Vance, 1983).

* Former teachers and those who are planning to leave are much more inclined than other teachers to believe that the intellectual challenge is better in other occupations (Louis Harris & Associates, 1985).

Reasons for attrition are not clearcut. On the one hand, many teachers express dissatisfaction with working conditions, salary levels, lack of support from administrators and peers, lack of respect, and limited opportunities for advancement (Cherniss, 1988; Darling-Hammond, 1984; Kaiser, 1981; Wangberg, Metzger, & Levitov, 1984). On the other hand, it also seems that many teachers follow career paths that take them into, out of, and back into the profession (Murnane, Singer, & Willett, 1988); that ease of transfer and re-entry into teaching accounts for some of the mobility (Heyns, 1988); that attrition patterns may reflect many teachers' reasonable decisions to use education as a springboard for other career plans (Murnane, 1987); and that significant differences in opportunities for employment outside of teaching account for some of the higher attrition that occurs in such fields as math and science (Murnane, 1987).

In special education, additional factors may be operating. For one thing, the proportion of younger teachers appears to be greater than for general education, and the overall attrition rate is also higher in special education than in general education (Lauritzen, 1988). In addition, attrition caused by isolation, burnout, stress, and related factors is elevated among special educators (Chandler, 1983; Fimian & Blanton, 1986; Fimian & Santoro, 1983), "with rates

estimated up to 34 to 50 percent. Attrition rates of up to 21 percent at the end of the first year of employment and 53 percent at the end of the fifth year are reported for teachers in emotional disturbance/behavior disorders" (Morsink, 1988, p. 10). Further, a recent Wisconsin study yielded the following findings on attrition in general and special education (Bogenschild, Lauritzen, & Metzke, 1988, cited by the National Clearinghouse for Professions in Special Education, 1989):

> Significant differences in attrition rates were found between fully certified and provisionally certified special education teachers, between general and special education teachers, between teachers under and over age 35, between teachers with one to five years of experience and those with more experience, and between teachers with graduate training and undergraduate training only. There was no significant difference between rural and urban teachers in either general or special education.
>
> The higher attrition rate among provisionally (emergency) certified special education teachers shows that this practice does not offer a long-term solution to teacher shortages. The rate of attrition in multicategorical programs was three times the attrition rate of teachers in any single categorical program. Attrition among teachers under age 35 and among teachers with less than five years' experience was significantly greater than attrition among older and more experienced teachers. The authors suggest teacher induction programs as one means for decreasing the isolation of special educators and of enriching the early teaching experience. (p. 2)

TEACHER INDUCTION PROGRAMS

Because a disproportionate number of teachers leave the field in the early years of teaching, the support of early induction programs is thought to be an important measure for retaining new personnel. Induction activities and mentoring are common in medicine, social and public services, and business (Fagan & Walter, 1982) and have multiplied in education in recent years.

New teachers, however, are introduced to their first jobs in ways that differ from the introduction to many other professions and vocations, inasmuch as the experience is not gradual. As Lortie (1975) points out, the beginning teacher is responsible for teaching students from the very first day and is expected to perform the very same tasks that the veteran of 25 years performs. "Tasks are not added sequentially to allow for a gradual increase in skill and knowledge; the beginner learns while performing the full complement of teaching duties" (Lortie, 1975, p. 72). Further, although new teachers may at first receive more supervisory attention from the building principal, they have typically been "left to their own devices to endure the first few years of teaching. . . Lortie (1966) refers to this pattern of induction as the 'Robinson Crusoe' model, while Houston and Felder (1982) compare such treatment to the 'breaking of horses'" (Hoffman, Edwards, O'Neal, Barnes, & Paulissen, 1986, p. 16).

In addition to the high anxiety level noted among beginning teachers by Lortie (1975), the average beginning teacher is characterized by Burden (1981, cited by Wildman & Borko, 1985, p. 7) as having:

* Limited knowledge of teaching practices.
* Limited knowledge of the teaching environment.
* A subject-centered approach to the curriculum and to teaching.
* Conformity to the image of teacher as authority.
* Limited professional insights and perceptions.
* Feelings of uncertainty, confusion, and insecurity; and
* Unwillingness to try new teaching methods.

To address these and other needs of the new teacher, structured programs of support and assistance are emerging in many schools and districts, often conducted mutually by public schools, higher education faculty members, and/or state departments of education (Smith-Davis & Cohen, 1988). Some induction programs emphasize training and assessment, while others focus on assisting the teacher, rather than using the induction period as an indicator of his or her skills (ERIC Clearinghouse on Teacher Education, 1986a).

According to Jensen (1987), although induction formats vary, they all contain the common feature of promoting a high level of interaction among new teachers, their colleagues, and administrators. Jensen (1987, p. 10) also describes three induction models:

* In one model, the energies of school and higher education personnel are combined. Teacher educators work together with district administrators and classroom teachers to ensure that the transition from student teaching to full-time teaching is smooth.

* Another model emphasizes supervision and coaching from the building administrator or from district staff development personnel. In some cases, the first year of teaching is considered as an internship featuring intensive feedback from district supervisors.

* A common model of induction uses experienced teachers as mentors, who provide the new teacher with legitimate access to a colleague's expertise. The mentor program provides a sounding board for the new teacher's questions and concerns, and mentor teachers may provide formal classroom observations in a format of clinical supervision.

The role of the mentor or supervisor appears to be crucial. "A mentor should be an opener of doors, a role model, a confidant, and a successful leader. Most of all, the mentor should be dedicated to the success of the protege" (Wildman, 1985, p. 31). In a survey of 290 new teachers participating in a Beginning Teacher Program, Huffman and Leak (1986) found that it was important to have mentors with knowledge and experience in the same subject, specialty, or grade level as the novice teachers they assisted. Outcomes of this survey also suggested the importance of adequate time for informal planning and conversation between mentors and beginning teachers. Respondents found adequate time for informal interactions and discussion to be particularly valuable.

As induction and mentoring activities multiply, new insights are emerging on their content and structure. For example, Fox and Singletary (1986) state that it is just as important for a new teacher to relate closely and substantively to his or her peers as to a mentor. "Frequent, regular meetings with individuals who are experiencing similar situations and problems provide new teachers with an opportunity to exchange views. These exchanges can also minimize feelings of isolation" (p. 14). Further, though most induction programs include such content as faculty and facility orientation, classroom management, classroom discipline, professional conduct, school expectations, and similar content (ERIC Clearinghouse on Teacher Education, 1986a), Fox and Singletary (1986) also point out that few of these programs emphasize the development of a "reflective orientation and the skills necessary to self-evaluation" (p. 12).

Another insight concerns the potential for confusing "assessment" with "evaluation" in the induction experience:

> An effective mentoring process is built on a foundation of mutual trust. The objective of the process is assistance. Both are placed in serious jeopardy if the mentor is saddled with evaluation responsibilities. Assessment, however, is an important part of the mentoring process which allows the protegé self-criticism and direction for improvement. Programs can resolve this conflict by appointing separate evaluators or evaluation teams which meet with the protegé and mentor to discuss performance evaluations. (ERIC Clearinghouse on Teacher Education, 1986c, p. 1)

EXAMPLES FROM A SCHOOL DISTRICT AND A UNIVERSITY

The Houston Mathematics and Science Improvement Consortium (Miller, Thomson, & Roush, 1989) has, for the past four years, involved high school math and science teachers with practicing scientists and mathematicians as mentors. In 1988, the program expanded to include teachers from elementary schools and community colleges. Sponsored by the National Science Foundation and coordinated by Baylor College of Medicine, this 12-month program begins with a six-week summer program and continues with Saturday seminars for the academic year.

The goals of the program are to familiarize teachers with new trends in math and science and to produce curriculum materials for the schools. An important side effect, however, has been a marked increase in teachers' self-respect and motivation. "Since 25 percent of all teachers report that a lack of respect is one of the major frustrations of teaching, these unexpected benefits may be at least as important as the stated goals of the program" (Miller, Thomson, & Roush, 1989, p. 465). While these benefits accrue for the teachers, mentors themselves gain a greater understanding of the public schools and a greater appreciation of educators.

In addition to the substantive learning that results from the Houston Consortium, other payoffs are described by Miller, Thomson, & Roush (1989, p. 467):

* Dissemination effects: The pairing of a mentor with a secondary teacher led to an enriched curriculum that teacher participants actively transmitted to colleagues and students in their schools.

* Collegial dynamics: Many of the ripple effects of the project have derived from the interactions of teachers in sharing techniques and materials with one another.

* Continuing impacts: The network of teachers and mentors continues to exist after the formal aspects of the project have been concluded.

* Low monetary investment: Stipends paid to participants are modest ($2,400 for teachers; $1,750 for mentors), but the investment reaches far beyond these recipients, as teachers share their materials and knowledge with others, both formally and informally.

* Professional image: Mentors develop great respect for teachers and a better appreciation for the work of the schools.

TEACHER INDUCTION at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater is a planned program of support and assistance for beginning teachers by a team from the local schools and the University (University of Wisconsin-Whitewater, 1987). One of the first such programs in the United States, it was initiated by the Wisconsin Improvement Program (a consortium of 18 teacher training institutions in the state) in 1971 and implemented at Whitewater in 1974. The goals (p. 12) are to:

1. Provide a planned first-year teaching experience which makes possible a broad variety of professional learning experiences;

2. Reach a level of professional skill and judgment which characterizes a well qualified career teacher;

3. Raise professional competency to a level distinctly above that of the beginning teacher holding a bachelor's degree;

4. Re-explore numerous teaching techniques/strategies and experience others;

5. Develop extensive professional understanding and familiarity with the inductee's scope of certification;

6. Synthesize various learning theories and study their application to different types of teaching and learning; and

7. Develop an individual teaching style based on broad observations, discussion, and consultation.

The Whitewater program provides support and assistance to the new teacher through his or her entire first year. Administrators select participants and, as soon as the new teacher signs the contract, the induction team is formed

(including a school administrator, mentor teacher, and a university consultant, all of whom have knowledge of the subject, grade, and/or specialty of the inductee).

With guidance from the induction team, the new teacher prepares a Personal Development Plan, which helps the inductee to identify concerns in six categories: behavior management, planning, instructional organization and development, presentation of subject matter, communication, and testing. With the help of the team, the new teacher sets goals identified by the plan and develops ways to achieve these goals.

On the basis of the Personal Development Plan, the new teacher seeks assistance daily or weekly from the mentor teacher. The university consultant gives direct support through monthly meetings at the school and also receives weekly written reports from the inductee. Monthly seminars help team members to examine concerns common to their inductees.

During the 1984-85 academic year, an experimental research design was developed to study the Whitewater Teacher Induction Program. Twelve program inductees formed the experimental group, and twelve randomly selected first-year teachers (not in the induction program) formed the control group. Other forms of evaluation have involved school administrators. Outcomes are summarized as follows (University of Wisconsin-Whitewater, 1987, p. 12):

> Findings showed that: (a) 100 percent of the experimental group completed the 1984-85 academic year, while only 83 percent of the control group completed the first year of teaching; (b) 75 percent of the experimental group indicated they planned to be teaching in five years, while only 25 percent of the control group indicated this; and (c) 100 percent of the experimental group felt free to seek assistance from their mentor, principal, and consultant, while the control group felt they had no one to assist them.
>
> Administrators involved in the program indicate: (a) fewer problems with first-year teachers when they are working with the induction program (fewer student referrals, fewer parent calls, fewer student complaints); (b) a close working relationship between first-year teachers and their mentors as a primary reason for fewer problems; (c) new possibilities for experienced teachers to serve as mentors and to experience the inservice sessions that were offered.
>
> Inductees involved in the program say that: (a) the mentor is the key person in the success of the first-year teacher; (b) the weekly report to the university consultant is especially helpful because it forces a review of the week's work; and (c) in-class observation by the mentor-consultant is most helpful.

Teacher Induction at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater was recognized by the Educational Testing Service in 1980 as one of 20 exemplary programs in the nation. It was awarded the "Educational Program of the Year" award by the Wisconsin Association of Teacher Educators in 1984 and received a 1985 "National Showcase of Excellence" award from the American Association of State Colleges and Universities.

SELECTED STATE INITIATIVES

Many state legislatures have mandated induction programs since 1980 (ERIC Clearinghouse on Teacher Education, 1986b), and approximately three-fourths of the states are believed to have a beginning teacher assistance program (Lind, 1988). The following is a review of a few such state initiatives.

THE VIRGINIA BOARD OF EDUCATION adopted requirements affecting initial certification and continuing professional development of teachers in February 1982 (Commonwealth of Virginia, 1986). The Board's requirements that are relevant to Virginia's Beginning Teacher Assistance Program are as follows:

* Effective July 1, 1985, first-time applicants for teacher certification in Virginia were required to obtain a two-year non-renewable teaching certificate.

* To receive a five-year renewable collegiate professional certificate, beginning teachers must demonstrate satisfactory performance in the classroom within a two-year provisional period (p. 2).

Nine regional centers have been established in Virginia to assist the State Department of Education with the Beginning Teacher Program (Virginia Department of Education, undated). Soon after becoming employed, all new teachers receive the Beginning Teacher Assistance program materials, which include two books: Assisting the Beginning Teacher provides information on professional knowledge and is designed to help inductees pass the assessment phase of the program; the Beginning Teacher's Handbook views the teacher as a problem-solver and explores tasks involved in solving instructional problems (Virginia Department of Education, undated).

During the fall of their first year of teaching, beginning teachers are observed three times by three observers appointed by the State Department of Education. These three observations comprise an assessment (Virginia Department of Education, 1988). "If the teacher meets the requirements during the first assessment, no further observations are necessary. If not, assistance is provided for the teacher before the second assessment period in the spring of the first year. . . . Assistance is structured and delivered through fourteen 2-1/2 hour instructional sessions. Each session focuses on one of the fourteen competencies" (p. 4) that teachers are expected to demonstrate:

* Academic learning time
* Student accountability
* Clarity of lesson structure
* Individual differences
* Evaluation

* Consistent rules
* Affective climate
* Learner self-concept
* Meaningful learning (relating instruction to material already learned, student interests, cultural background, etc)
* Planning
* Questioning skill
* Reinforcement
* Close supervision (of individual and group activities)
* Awareness (of what is occurring in the classroom)

All new teachers are encouraged to attend as many of the sessions as possible, and those who have not yet demonstrated all fourteen competencies must participate in sessions that deal with the competencies they lack.

NORTH CAROLINA's requirement for an Initial Certification Program for Administrators and Curriculum/Instructional Specialists was adopted by the State Board of Education effective in January 1985. Proposed State Board guidelines, currently being piloted, call for: "a support and assessment system during the two-year period of initial certification, that provides the basis for conversion of the initial certificate to a continuing certificate for any individual who receives a minimum of 'at standard' performance at the end of the two-year period on criteria judged to be essential for successful performance" (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 1988, p. 1). Subsequently, the following list of skills was developed to assess the successful performance of new administrators and curriculum/instructional specialists (p. 1):

* Problem analysis
* Judgment
* Decisiveness
* Leadership
* Sensitivity
* Organizational ability
* Oral communication
* Written communication
* Instructional leadership

The Initial Certification Program includes early assessment of these competencies, with continuing support and documentation to refine job-specific skills through the assistance of a trained mentor. The induction program begins with a diagnostic process conducted in group settings and using simulations. These activities assess the inductee's ability to function across K-12 levels. The outcomes of the diagnostic process remain confidential between the mentor and inductee, unless the inductee wishes to share it with his or her employer. Subsequent mentor support is drawn from a cadre of trained mentors in the local or neighboring education agencies. The mentor links job-specific assistance to the documentation and verification of successful performance. Initial support for the inductee is available through collegial groups which provide opportunities for job-specific growth in a non-evaluative atmosphere (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 1988).

Mentors participating in this North Carolina program receive training to master the following (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 1988, p. 2):

* Knowledge of the general skills that an initially certified person should possess and a description of each skill area;

* Use of simulations to gain insight into the level of functioning of the initially certified person in each skill area;

* Skills in shadowing (observing the initially certified person in an actual work experience), making a determination of the quality of the work experience, and providing directions for possible growth;

* An understanding of the role relationships between the initially certified person and mentor; recognizing helping styles that facilitate skill development;

* An understanding of effective communication skills that will facilitate growth of the initially certified person;

* An understanding of adult conceptual development to assist in providing technical assistance; and

* Skills in conducting effective conferences.

THE WISCONSIN State Superintendent's Advisory Committee on Beginning Teacher Assistance Programs recommended, in 1988, that a statewide program for entry-year assistance be phased in over two years, and that all Wisconsin first-year teachers be part of such a program in the 1990-91 school year (Lind, 1989, p. 4). The Committee further recommended that "assistance to beginning teachers should be . . . based on an assessment of emerging needs of first-year teachers and should include the following topics" (Lind, 1989, pp. 3-4):

* Classroom management
* Time management
* Evaluation of students' achievement
* Teaching strategies
* Communication with students, parents, and colleagues
* Conferences with parents
* Professional rights and responsibilities
* Special district programs
* Teaching culturally diverse students
* Working in culturally diverse communities
* Assistance with the socialization process in the school and community

The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction's Teaching Incentives Pilot Program has funded eight successful beginning teacher pilot projects in 34 districts. The results of these projects (Lind 1989, p. 3) have shown that:

* A formal beginning teacher assistance program can have a positive effect on teacher retention.

* Participation in such a program contributes to first-year teachers' job satisfaction and attitudes about teaching.

* Assistance and support to beginning teachers can help resolve problems and concerns in such areas as classroom management skills and improved relationships with students.

* Classroom observation and follow-up conferences regarding teaching performance by an experienced teacher/mentor were not only helpful but welcomed by most first-year teachers.

* A majority of beginning teachers identified their mentors as their most valued form of assistance and support.

* Local districts experienced a positive change among staff involved in the beginning teacher assistance program.

* Mentor teachers improved their classroom skills through specific training, while their shared enthusiasm positively affected teachers not directly involved in the program.

* The program strengthened partnerships between colleges and universities and elementary and secondary schools.

* The renewal of teacher education programs -- including significant program (curriculum) changes -- occurred because the program involved colleges and universities, which gained a better understanding of elementary and secondary school programs.

* The program enhanced circumstances that are necessary in achieving the ultimate goal of all educational programs -- improved student learning.

FLORIDA'S BEGINNING TEACHER PROGRAM was implemented on July 1, 1982, and amended in 1984. Its purposes are to: (a) ensure documentation of successful demonstration of the minimum essential generic competencies required to be taught in state-approved programs of teacher education (in accordance with Section 231.17, Florida Statutes, Rule 6A-5.075 FAC); and (b) provide supervised support services for the beginning teacher during the first year of employment as a Florida teacher (Cheavers, 1989).

Each school district submits a plan for approval of a Florida Beginning Teacher Program to the Commissioner of Education. This plan becomes a section of the approved District Master Inservice Plan. Today all of Florida's 67 school districts have an approved plan, and 47 independent schools, associations of independent schools or state agencies also have approved plans. The number of individuals participating in the Florida Beginning Teacher Program has increased each year, and, by 1988-89, a total of 8,600 teachers had successfully completed the process.

Any applicant for the initial regular certificate must participate in the Florida program; an experienced teacher may demonstrate the competencies during the first 90 days of employment. For individuals who participate in the program, the requirements are as follows (Cheavers, 1989).

* The participant must be a full-time employee.

* The participant must hold a valid temporary certificate during the time of participation in the program.

* The participant must receive full pay according to the adopted salary schedule of the school district and be a member of the bargaining unit, with the same rights as any other first-year teacher.

* Beginning teacher activities shall be based on classroom applications of the essential competencies.

* Beginning teachers are assigned a support staff of at least three members: a building administrator, a peer teacher, and another professional educator.

* The support staff shall conduct at least five observations of the beginning teacher: a diagnostic observation, three formative evaluations, and a final summative observation.

* Successful completion of the Beginning Teacher Program indicates: (a) one full school year of participation in the program, or demonstration of the essential competencies within 90 days by a teacher with a minimum of one full year of successful teaching; (b) documentation of successful demonstration of the essential competencies; (c) verification of successful completion by the superintendent on official forms to the Certification Section, Florida Department of Education.

Each district plan includes a section describing an annual evaluation of the district's Beginning Teacher Program. Districts use the findings of these evaluations for program improvement. The results are also submitted to the Florida Department of Education, which uses the findings for recommendations to the Legislature and State Board of Education for improvements in the Florida Beginning Teacher Program.

IN UTAH, Senate Bill 100 mandated that all provisional teachers be assigned a consulting teacher during their probation periods (Utah Learning Resource Center, 1989). Subsequently, the Utah Mentor Academy project was developed, through the Utah Special Education Consortium for a Comprehensive System of Personnel Development and the Utah Learning Resource Center. Focusing on the idea that Utah has good teachers who can help others, the Mentor Academy began with 30 teachers and has expanded over the past several years. Mentors learn not only to help others to use proven instructional practices, but also to communicate, support others, facilitate cooperation, and provide inservice training (Young, 1989). Through the Mentor Academy, Utah's educators have taken the mentoring concept beyond the original requirement of strengthening the skills of provisional teachers and into many additional arenas. The following are some examples of these applications.

* A peer-to-peer mentoring program was started in the Washington County School District in 1987-88. A group of twelve special education and general education teachers volunteered for inservice training in peer coaching and, during the 1988-89 school year, each of them was assigned as a peer coach for two or three other teachers in the district, acting as "(a) an interested and caring listener, (b) a demonstrator of effective teaching practices, (c) a trouble shooter, (d) a multidisciplinary team member, (e) a supporter and morale booster, (f) a resource for materials and ideas, and (g) a disseminator of information" (Christopherson & Walker, 1989, p. 5).

* The mentor program of the Davis School District is developing a communication network among eight northern county elementary schools. The goal is to "develop a sense of camaraderie and take the special education teacher out of isolation from a self-contained setting into the least restrictive environment" (Stantus, 1989, p. 7).

* In the Ogden City Schools (Harrington & Dooling-Baker, 1989), special educators have developed a mentoring plan which includes:

> * An effective and responsive staff development system;
> * A communication network;
> * A library of training videos (featuring Ogden teachers engaged in exemplary modeling of teaching techniques);
> * Adequate staff to implement the plan effectively; and
> * Designation of model classrooms for teachers to visit. (p. 4)

Many other school districts in the state are also involved in planned variations of the mentoring process. These activities show promise of supporting, stimulating, and retaining not only new teachers, but experienced personnel as well.

CONCLUSION

Although many teacher induction programs have been initiated so recently that effectiveness outcomes are not yet available (ERIC Clearinghouse on Teacher Education, 1986b), the evidence thus far suggests a number of direct and indirect benefits. In a study of two state-mandated programs, Hoffman et al. (1986) concluded that "the programs appeared to work best when the teaching context was appropriate to the talents and interests of the first-year teacher. The programs did not provide sufficient support to overcome inappropriate placements or stressful work conditions" (p. 20).

In a review of expectations of teacher induction programs, Huling-Austin (1986) suggested that such programs <u>can</u> reasonably be expected to:

> * Improve the teaching performance of beginning teachers if the teachers are provided with ongoing support and assistance grounded in a clearly articulated, context-specific vision of what constitutes effective teaching performance;
>
> * Increase the retention rate of promising beginning teachers during the induction years;

> * Screen out the least promising teachers if the program includes provision to do so and if there are policies and procedures in place that allow this to happen in ways that conform with due process requirements;
>
> * Promote the personal and professional well being of teachers by fostering each teacher's self-esteem and orienting him or her to the culture of the workplace; and
>
> * Satisfy mandated requirements related to induction and certification. (pp. 4-5)

On the other hand, Huling-Austin (1986) points out that induction programs cannot reasonably be expected to:

> * Overcome major problems in the school context such as misplacements, overloads, overcrowded classes, etc;
>
> * Develop into successful teachers those beginning teachers who enter the profession without the background, ability, and personal characteristics necessary to constitute the potential to be acceptable teachers; or
>
> * Substantially influence the long-term retention of teachers in the profession if additional changes are not made in the educational system at large. (p. 5, italics added)

Thus, beginning teacher assistance programs should be viewed as one substantial strategy for reducing the high rate of attrition among personnel in the early years of their teaching careers. Many other programs, incentives, and changes in schools and in teachers' career experiences should also be considered when any comprehensive plan to reduce overall attrition is considered.

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This document was prepared pursuant to Grant No. G0087C3053-88 with the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services. Agencies undertaking such projects under government sponsorship are encouraged to express their judgment freely in professional and technical matters. Points of view or opinions do not, therefore, necessarily represent official Department of Education position or policy.

Entry-Year Induction Programs And Practices:

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The National Clearinghouse for Professions in Special Education thanks the ERIC Clearinghouse on Handicapped and Gifted Children for assistance in preparing this bibliography.

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